

Message Text

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ACTION CU-03

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 EUR-12 EB-07 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 AID-05 IO-13 SS-15 SP-02 NSC-05 PRS-01 PA-01

EA-07 COME-00 DODE-00 TRSE-00 /085 W

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R 151030Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2731

USIA WASHDC

INFO AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PARAMARIBO 0622

USIA FOR DIRECTOR KEOGH

DEPT FOR CU, ASST SECY RICHARDSON: ARA, DEP ASST SECY LUERS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: SOPN, SCUL, NS

SUBJ: US INFORMATION AND CULTURAL REQUIREMENTS IN SURINAM

SUMMARY: THIS MESSAGE OUTLINES THE PURPOSES FOR WHICH AN INFORMATIONAL-CULTURAL PROGRAM COULD BE CARRIED OUT IN SURINAM; THE IMPORTANCE OF SUCH A PROGRAM; THE POSSIBILITIES OF ACHIEVING SIGNIFICANT OBJECTIVES; AND THE RESOURCES THAT WOULD BE REQUIRED; AND RECOMMENDS AN INTERAGENCY STUDY AS A BASIS FOR DECISION IN THIS MATTER. END SUMMARY.

1. US RELATIONS WITH SURINAM DATE FROM 1790 BUT SURINAM DID NOT ASSUME A ROLE ON THE MODERN INTERNATIONAL STAGE UNTIL IT GAINED INDEPENDENCE FROM THE NETHERLANDS IN NOVEMBER, 1975. IN THE INSPECTION CARRIED OUT IN LATE 1975, IN THE THINKING IN WASHINGTON, AND IN DISCUSSION BETWEEN DIRECTOR KEOGH AND THE NEW AMBASSADOR EARLY THIS YEAR, IT WAS ACCEPTED THAT THE US WOULD KEEP A "LOW-PROFILE" IN SURINAM, THAT THE COUNTRY'S PRINCIPAL CONNECTION WITH THE ADVANCED WORLD WOULD CONTINUE TO BE THE NETHERLANDS, CONFIDENTIAL

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AND THAT THIS WOULD ACCORD THE US INTERESTS. TROUBLE IS,

THINGS ARE PROBABLY NOT GOING TO WORK OUT THAT WAY.

2. TO BEGIN WITH, A FEW FACTS ABOUT SURINAM. IT HAS AN AREA OF 170 THOUSAND SQUARE KILOMETERS AND A POPULATION OF ABOUT 400 THOUSAND PEOPLE. THE PER CAPITA GNP IS AROUND \$900, PUTTING SURINAM IN THE TOP FOUR OF SOUTH AMERICA, ALONG WITH VENEZUELA, ARGENTINA AND CHILE. THE POPULATION IS ABOUT ONE-THIRD ASIAN INDIANS, ONE-THIRD CREOLES AND ONE-THIRD REST. A HERITAGE OF THE DUTCH IS THE FACT THAT DUTCH IS THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE AND SPOKEN BY THE ENTIRE URBAN POPULATION AND MUCH OF THOSE OUTSIDE; ENGLISH IS WIDELY USED, HOWEVER, AND IS UNIVERSALLY SPOKEN, AND WELL, BY THE EDUCATED CLASSES. THE PERCENTAGE OF PEOPLE WITH HIGHER EDUCATION AND UNIVERSITY DEGREES IS UNUSUAL IN AN UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRY. THE POLITICS IS DIVIDED FIRST ON ETHNIC GROUNDS, WITH THE INDIANS AND CEROLES AS THE MAIN PROTAGONISTS, BUT INCREASINGLY THERE WILL BE IDEOLOGICAL SPLITS BETWEEN RADICALS AND CONSERVATIVES, BETWEEN THOSE WHO WANT TO MAINTAIN WESTERN TIES AND THOSE WHO WANT TO GO WITH THE THIRD WORLD, BETWEEN THOSE WHO SEE THEIR ECONOMIC FUTURE IN TERMS OF COOPERATION AND TRADE WITH THE UNITED STATES AND THOSE WHO WANT TO NATIONALIZE FOREIGN INVESTMENTS AND GO THEIR OWN WAY. THE OUTCOME OF THESE SPLITS WILL BE IMPORTANT TO THE US.

3. THE MAJOR US ALUMINUM PRODUCER, ALCOA, HAS BEEN HERE SINCE 1916 AND GETS NO LESS THAN 20 PER CENT OF ITS BAUXITE REQUIREMENTS FROM SURINAM. IT IS THE BIGGEST EMPLOYER IN THE COUNTRY, AFTER THE GOVERNMENT, AND, ALONG WITH THE LESS IMPORTANT DUTCH COMPANY BILLITON, ITS OPERATIONS ACCOUNT FOR SOME 85 PER CENT OF SURINAM'S FOREIGN EXCHANGE RECEIPTS. ALCOA'S WHOLLY-OWNED SUBSIDIARY, SURALCO, IS DOING WELL AT THE MOMENT, BUT THIS IS BOUND TO CHANGE OVER THE YEARS AHEAD. THE NATURAL GROWTH OF NATIONALISM, THE EXAMPLES OF OTHER COUNTRIES (HOWEVER MISGUIDED OR UNSUCCESSFUL IN SOME CASES) IN TAKING OVER CONTROL OF THEIR OWN RESOURCES, AND THE FRICTIONS THAT INEVITABLY ARISE FROM THE PATERNALISTIC, COMPANY-TOWN SITUATION THAT EXISTS HERE WILL LEAD, IN TIME, TO THE ASSUMPTION OF CONTROL OVER SURALCO BY SURINAM WHETHER BY PURCHASE, NATIONALIZATION OR OTHER PROCESS. IT WILL BE IMPORTANT TO THE US THAT THIS HAPPEN, WHEN IT HAPPENS, IN A WAY THAT STRENGTHENS, OR

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AT LEAST DOES NOT SERIOUSLY WEAKEN, US-SURINAM RELATIONS.

4. INTERNATIONALLY, SURINAM IS JUST BEGINNING TO SEEK OUT A PLACE FOR ITSELF IN THE WORLD. IT HAS CUT ITS TIES WITH HOLLAND, DOES NOT WANT TO BE A CLIENT OF THE US, SHIES AWAY FROM BEING LUMPED WITH THE UNSTABLE STATES OF THE CARIBBEAN, AND WANTS TO BE RECOGNIZED AS A SOUTH AMERICAN COUNTRY. IT IS BEING COURTED BY BRAZIL AND VENEZUELA AND WANTS IN TURN TO WIN THEIR

SUPPORT IN ORDER TO BUTTRESS ITS POSITION AGAINST ITS ONLY "ENEMY," THE NEXT-DOOR GUYANA WITH WHICH IT HAS A SERIOUS BORDER PROBLEM AND WHOSE POSITION AS A THIRD WORLD LEADER AROUSES ITS ENVY. WHILE IT MAY NEVER ERUPT INTO WAR AND LOOKS RATHER MINOR TO AN OUTSIDER, THE SURINAM-GUYANA DISPUTE HAS THE SEEDS OF AN AREA-WIDE CONFLICT, WITH VENEZUELA CLAIMING A LARGE CHUNK OF THE OTHER SIDE OF GUYANA, BRAZIL WANTING AN OUTLET TO THE SEA TO THE NORTH, AND ALL HAVING A DEEP CONCERN ABOUT THE INFLUENCE OF CUBA AND WHAT THEY SEE AS COMMUNISM IN GUYANA. THE PROGRESS OF THIS SITUATION WILL HAVE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE US BOTH IN TERMS OF ITS BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH THE COUNTRIES CONCERNED AND OF THE REGIONAL IMPLICATIONS. THIS APPEARS TO BE TRUE FOR OTHER COUNTRIES TOO: A HIGHLY-PLACED OFFICIAL IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY TELLS US HE EXPECTS THE PEOPLES REPUBLIC OF CHINA TO BE SETTING UP ITS EMBASSY HERE WITHIN TWO MONTHS; FRANCE WILL FOLLOW SOON AFTER; NORTH KOREA IS NEGOTIATING WITH THE SURINAMERS NOW; CUBA WILL CERTAINLY BE HERE AS SOON AS THEY DECIDE TO COME. FROM A SLEEPY DUTCH BACKWATER, SURINAM IS GOING TO BECOME AN ARENA, ALBEIT A MINOR ONE, FOR THE CONTENTIONS THAT ARE ENDEMIC TO TODAY'S WORLD.

5. THE US HAS INTERESTS IN SURINAM, AND IT HAS AN INTEREST IN SURINAM'S INTERNATIONAL POSITION. WE ARE NOT ONLY SURINAM'S MOST IMPORTANT TRADING PARTNER, BUT THE ABSOLUTE VOLUME OF

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R 151030Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO

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INFO AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 PARAMARIBO 0622

USIA FOR DIRECTOR KEOGH

DEPT FOR CU, ASST SECY RICHARDSON: ARA, DEPT ASST SECY LUERS
THIS TRADE, NOW SMALL, IS GOING TO GROW. THE NETHERLANDS
IS PUTTING US\$150 MILLION A YEAR HERE IN AID FOR THE NEXT
TEN YEARS, AND A SIGNIFICANT PORTION OF THIS WILL GO FOR THE
PROCUREMENT OF GOODS AND SERVICES IN THE U.S. WE ARE
INTERESTED IN SURINAM'S VOTE IN THE UN AND IN OTHER INTERNA-
TIONAL BODIES. AND, IN COMPARISON WITH MANY OTHER PLACES,
WE HAVE THE POSSIBILITY HERE OF ACHIEVING REASONABLE RESULTS
FROM A REASONABLE EXPENDITURE OF EFFORT AND RESOURCES. THERE
IS A GREAT RESERVOIR OF FRIENDSHIP AND REGARD FOR THE
U.S., BUT KNOWLEDGE IS SCARCE. THE SITUATION REGARDING THE
REST OF THE NON-DUTCH WORLD IS EVEN WORSE: THE PRIME MINISTER
INADVERTENTLY REFERRED IN A PRESS CONFERENCE TO NORTH KOREA
WHEN HE MEANT SOUTH KOREA, BECAUSE HE GETS THEM MIXED UP;
THE LACK OF U.S. NEWS SERVICES LEAVES THE FIELD OPEN TO
THOSE WHO DESCRIBE PUERTO RICO AS UP IN ARMS DEMONSTRATING
AGAINST THE ECONOMIC SUMMIT THERE, AS THE OPPRESSED
PEOPLE STRUGGLE TO OVERTHROW U.S. COLONIALISM-IMPERIALISM;
THE RADICAL AND CUBA-ORIENTED NEWS FROM OTHER LATIN AMERICAN
COUNTRIES IS NOTABLE; THE SURINAM REPRESENTATIVE AT UNCTAD
IN NAIROBI, HIMSELF A MEMBER OF A LEFTIST PARTY, DID HIS
BEST TO IDENTIFY HIS COUNTRY WITH THOSE WHO HAVE THROWN OUT
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THE IMPERIALIST WARMONGERS AND LOOKS UPON HIMSELF AS THE
FUTURE BURNHAM OF SURINAM.

6. WHAT WE NEED TO DO IN THIS SITUATION IS TO SUPPLY
SURINAM WITH THE INFORMATION ABOUT THE U.S. AND THE REST
OF THE WORLD NECESSARY FOR ITS PEOPLE TO MAKE UP THEIR OWN
MINDS AS TO THE POSITIONS THEY WANT TO ADOPT IN INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS. THE OPPORTUNITY IS THERE, IN THAT ACCURATE
INFORMATION IS SADLY LACKING AND DISINFORMATION ADVERSE TO
OUR INTERESTS IS PLENTIFUL. THE RESULTS COULD BE GOOD,
SINCE THE PEOPLE ARE READY AND WILLING TO BELIEVE US IF WE
WILL ONLY PAY ATTENTION TO THEM. AND THE MARGINAL IMPORTANCE
OF THIS EXPENDITURE OF RESOURCES WOULD BE SIGNIFICANT TO THE
U.S. BECAUSE SURINAM WILL PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN THE
AFFAIRS OF THIS PART OF THE WORLD. HERE WE USE THE WORD
"INFORMATION" TO COVER THE ENTIRE MEANING OF AN INFORMATIONAL
AND CULTURAL PROGRAM.

7. AT THE PRESENT TIME THIS POST HAS NO AMERICAN USIS PERSONNEL
AND ONLY ONE USIS LOCAL. THE AMERICAN EFFORT CONSISTS OF
THE PART-TIME WORK OF A CONSULAR OFFICER WITH NO USIS BACK-
GROUND OR TRAINING, PLUS WHATEVER GUIDANCE AND PARTICIPATION
THE MORE SENIOR OFFICERS CAN DONATE FROM THEIR EXPERIENCE

AND THEIR RECOGNITION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PROBLEM. WE HAVE OUR SHARE OF THE BLUE-GRASS COUNTRY MUSIC PEOPLE AND THE NAVY BAND, AND AN OCCASIONAL SUBSTANTIVE VISITOR IN A PUBLIC OR ACADEMIC FIELD. WHAT WE NEED TO DO, HOWEVER, IS TO CONVINCE THE LEADERS AND PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY THAT OUR PRESCRIPTIONS FOR THE NORTH-SOUTH ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP IN THE WORLD ARE EFFICACIOUS AND NOT MEANT SIMPLY TO MAINTAIN OUR DOMINANT POSITION; THAT OUR IDEAS AND EFFORTS ARE THE BEST HOPE FOR PEACE IN TROUBLED AREAS LIKE THE MIDDLE EAST AND KOREA, AND NOT SIMPLY THE PROPPING-UP OF REGIMES PARTIAL TO US BUT INIMICAL TO THE INTERESTS OF THE PEOPLE; THAT THE REVOLUTION CELEBRATED IN 1976 DID NOT END IN 1776 BUT IS A CONTINUING PROCESS WITH WHICH FREEDOM-SEEKING PEOPLES CAN ALLY THEMSELVES WITH THE ASSURANCE THAT THEY ARE ON THE RIGHT TRACK AND NOT SIMPLY FALLING VICTIM TO THE LATEST KIND OF IMPERIALISM. TO DO THIS KIND OF A JOB WE NEED A REAL SHARE OF USIA RESOURCES IN THE FORM OF PEOPLE, MATERIALS AND MONEY.

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8. IT IS OUR JOB TO PUT THE SITUATION HERE BEFORE YOU AS BEST WE CAN. WE CANNOT COMPARE THE PRIORITIES HERE WITH THOSE IN OTHER COUNTRIES AND AREAS. NOR DO WE WANT AT THIS STAGE TO TALK ABOUT NUMBERS OF POSITIONS OR AMOUNTS OF MONEY. WHAT WE DO WANT IS TO STIMULATE A STUDY IN WASHINGTON OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SURINAM FOR AMERICAN POLICY, THE NEEDS FOR ACTION ON THE INFORMATIONAL SCENE HERE, AND THE PROSPECTS OF REASONABLE RETURNS ON OUR INVESTMENTS OF ASSETS. WE HOPE THAT STATE, USIA, DOD, COMMERCE AND OTHER CONCERNED AGENCIES WILL GET TOGETHER AND DO THIS. IT SHOULDN'T TAKE LONG OR BE TOO BULKY; THERE ISN'T THAT MUCH TO THE PROBLEM. WE DON'T SAY THAT ALL THIS MUST BE DONE AT ONCE, OR ALL WILL BE LOST IF WE ARE NOT IN FULL SWING WITHIN THREE MONTHS, BUT NEITHER SHOULD WE, ON THE OTHER HAND, LET THINGS SLIDE HERE FOR YEARS UNTIL SOME LOCAL CASTRO OR BURNHAM HAS TURNED AGAINST US, TAKEN OUR INVESTMENTS, JOINED THE THIRD WORLD CABEL AGAINST US IN THE UN, AND POSSIBLY PROVIDED SECURITY PROBLEMS FOR OUR FRIENDS. ONCE A STUDY HAS BEEN MADE OF THE NEEDS, OPPORTUNITIES AND THE PROFITABILITY OF USE OF RESOURCES HERE, THEN WE WOULD EXPECT THAT AN ACTION PROGRAM COULD BE DRAWN UP. WE RECOGNIZE THAT ALL THIS MUST FIT IN WITH WORLD-WIDE REQUIREMENTS, BUT SURINAM IS PART OF THAT WORLD-WIDE SCHEME AND ITS POSITION IN OUR EFFORT CANNOT BE DECIDED SIMPLY ON THE GROUNDS OF ITS HAVING ACHIEVED INDEPENDENCE TOO LATE, AFTER OUR PROGRAMS FOR THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE HAD BEEN SET IN CONCRETE.

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